

Marriage Preparation Process:

Step 1: With your initial call/form submission I sign both the bride and groom up for a marriage inventory (questionnaire) through **Prepare-Enrich**. This helps to show us how prepared you are for marriage and what topics you need to discuss before you tie the knot. Don't cheat. Don't ask each other questions while taking the inventory. You can discuss afterwards. There is a **\$35 fee** that covers the both of you. Prepare-Enrich will send you a log-in and once you plug it in to the site, you can start! The results are automatically sent directly to me.

Step 2: When I receive the results I give you call to set you up with one of our Deacons to go over the results with you! You meet here at the office so start thinking about days and times that both of you will be available to meet with one of the Deacons. This can be done in two sessions but could go to 3-4 depending on the results of the inventory. I will set this appointment between the 3 of you. At this meeting he will fill out a Form V with each of you, and will give you 4 Freedom to Marry Affidavits that need to be signed and returned by your next meeting.

- Make sure that you contact your church of Baptism for your **newly-issued Baptismal Certificate** WITH any sacramental notations such as First Communion (if you want a Nuptial Mass) and Confirmation. **It has to be issued within 6 months of when you are getting married.** *If you have been married before in the church, and the marriage was annulled, that too will need to be on the back of the baptismal certificate. You will also need to provide the **FINAL DECREE OF NULLITY** for your marriage packet.* You will need all of this for your meeting with the Deacon. Once you contact your church of Baptism let them know that you are getting married and need the above requested item with notations. We do NOT want the original.
- If you are CONVALIDATING your marriage we will need a **certified COPY of your marriage license**. This stays in your packet forever, so please make sure that you keep a copy as well.
- **Freedom to Marry Affidavit** – you will each need to provide 2 of these. These are witnesses that can attest to the fact that they've known you for at least 10 years and that you are truly free to marry. These can be your parents, sibling or a close friend. We sign and seal it here. They just need to answer the question, print their name at the bottom and sign. The deacon provides these forms at your first meeting.

Step 3: Decide whether you want to do a weekend retreat or go through our Sponsor Couple Program. If you are one of our couples that are separated by distance (either by state/country) you have the option of doing Marriage Prep online through Life Ministries. This is approved by our Archdiocese. It is an 8 hour online course that covers all of the Pre-Cana requirements. If you are being married elsewhere, please make sure to forward this link to the church to see if it will be sufficient for their requirements.

For first time marriages:

<http://www.familylifeministryhouston.org/programs-for-engaged-couples.html>

Program Fee: \$225 This is the Engaged Encounter Weekend, Fri. – Sun.

You cannot leave until done.

For those married civilly:

<http://www.familylifeministryhouston.org/programs-for-re-married-and-civilly-married-couples.html>

Program Fee: \$125 Convalidation Weekend Retreat Fri. & Sat.

*For those needing online marriage prep: <https://catholicmarriageprepclass.com/couples/> Click on Get started. Click on USA. Click on Texas. Click on Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. You will need to do Living Our Faith in Love. Program Fee: \$195 **This class may only be taken by those separated by country or states. If you are living within the same city you may not use this form of marriage preparation.*

IF you choose to do the **Sponsor Couple Program**, please let the Deacon know and I will send your information to the Sponsor Couples Coordinators. This is done in 5 sessions and with workbooks given here in the office to the couple interested. It is done at their homes. Our sponsor couples reside in the woodlands and have their own families so once they get in contact with you, times can be arranged between the four of you. Program Fee: \$0

For all of these I will need a certificate of completion.

For all those couples going through marriage preparation we ask that you attend a one-time, Saturday class called ECOS – Engaged Couples Orientation Session. It is done on a Saturday from 8:30am-3pm. No fee. ECOS is a sacramental preparation class for couples going through marriage preparation regardless of where they plan to be married or how long they have been married. At this session we educate our couples on the Sacrament of Matrimony through various Catholic media, small groups, and testimony. Lunch is served and Child Care is provided if necessary.

You will need to attend with your future spouse. If neither of you can attend the following dates, please send either parents/future in-laws as your replacement. We prefer to have at least two people receive all this information so that they can convey everything to you properly in your absence, but we do understand that if this is not possible, then one person will attend. This is also the time in which you will pay for the use of the church if you plan on marrying at St. Anthony's. You must sign up on-line: <https://ap.church/sacraments/marriage/> Scroll down to Upcoming ECOS.

ECOS 2018 dates: 4/7, 6/2, 8/4, 10/13, 12/1

This class should be attended earlier in your marriage preparation than later – at the latest, 6 months before the ceremony.

That's it for now! You'll learn the rest at ECOS. If you have further questions please do not hesitate to call me M-F, 8:30-4:30pm. Or you can speak with any of our deacons here at the church. I look forward to working with all of you!

Congratulations, God bless and see you soon!
St. Anthony of Padua, Pray for us!

